

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate John Dean for his exemplary work as a law enforcement officer in Waterford Township. I ask the House of Representatives to join me in applauding his wonderful career and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 18, 2006

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, July 17, 2006, I could not be present for roll-call votes 375, 376, and 377 due to a previous commitment in my district.

Had I been present, I would have cast the following votes: "yes" on rollcall 375 (H.R. 3085)—To amend the National Trails System Act to update the feasibility and suitability study originally prepared for the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and provide for the inclusion of new trail segments, land components, and campgrounds associated with that trail; "no" on rollcall 376 (H.R. 3496—National Capital Transportation Amendments Act of 2005); and "yes" on rollcall 377 (H.R. 3729—Federal Judiciary Emergency Tolling Act of 2005).

HONORING THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ON RECEIVING THE INNOVATIONS IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AWARD FROM THE ASH INSTITUTE

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 18, 2006

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee, I would like to congratulate the Department of Veterans Affairs on receiving the prestigious Innovations in American Government Award on Monday, July 10 from the Ash Institute in the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, for their work in developing and implementing the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA). The VA was one of seven winners who were selected from more than 1,000 entries, including 200 forward thinking federal programs, that implemented a creative approach to a significant problem and demonstrated that their solution worked. This \$100,000 award will provide VA the opportunity to share VistA's success story as a role model to other government agencies and the private sector. I am proud of the Department of Veterans Affairs dedication in providing excellence in health care to our Nation's veterans.

The VistA system includes an electronic health record that organizes and presents all relevant patient data to directly support clinical decision-making, and improves safety and efficiency while reducing costs and staff requirements. Patient files are readily available, easily searchable, and proactive in that they alert providers to vital patient information. The records system enables physicians to review a patient's medical history, diagnoses, medica-

tions, charts and X-rays at any of the 1,400 VA sites.

At a time when Americans are wrestling with the high cost and complexity of medical services, VA officials point to VistA as the model for delivering on the key components of health care: accessibility, quality, and cost.

Five years ago, VA won an Innovation Award for creating a health management system that worked to reduce medical mistakes. VistA is a system whereby any authorized caregiver in VA's network has immediate access to every veteran's complete electronic medical record.

According to Dr. Jonathan B. Perlin, VA's Undersecretary for Health, the key to the success of the system was the full support of caregivers from the start. In fact, it was VA physicians who pushed for the system. It was developed in-house so that VA had complete control over the design and implementation.

On the quality-of-care front, the system has reduced outpatient medication errors from the national rate of 5 percent to a fraction of 1 percent. The system also enabled VA to manage vaccinations much more effectively, increasing the vaccination rate for pneumonia from 26 to 92 percent in a decade.

Also important, VistA has helped VA offer enrolled veterans better quality care than a decade ago. Their health status, as defined by patient functioning, has measurably improved. All of this has been provided at the same cost per patient as VA expended 10 years ago, while the rest of the country has seen costs nearly double.

This was a proud day for the VA. Secretary Jim Nicholson said "The VA is now at the forefront of America's health-care industry."

Once again, I would like to congratulate the veteran health providers at the Department of Veterans Affairs on receiving this well deserved award and thank them for their dedication in providing excellence in health care to our Nation's veterans.

ADDRESS BY FORMER SENATOR SAM NUNN AT NUCLEAR DANGERS SYMPOSIUM

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 18, 2006

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. Mr. Speaker, in reference to H. Res. 905, I submit an address by former Senator Sam Nunn, Co-Chairman and CEO of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, presented on December 16, 2003 at a symposium entitled Kazakhstan: Reducing Nuclear Dangers, Increasing Global Security.

SYMPOSIUM KEYNOTE ADDRESS

(By Sam Nunn)

I want to thank our guests for joining us today in the United States Senate, where so much deliberation has taken place on how to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, and where the example of Kazakhstan has been welcomed and celebrated as a model of what we must see in the 21st century.

President Nazarbayev is one of the greatest champions of nuclear nonproliferation in the world—not merely by his words, but—most importantly—by his actions and his nation's example.

President Nazarbayev tells a very striking personal story in the prologue of his book

Epicenter of Peace. As a child, he remembered having in his home an army rifle that had been taken by one of his relatives—a Kazakh militiaman—in a rebellion against a regular Russian army unit in 1916. One day his grandmother said that the rifle had brought suffering—that it should be cast out of the house. So President Nazarbayev's father took the rifle to the authorities, but not before removing the bayonet, which the grandmother ordered be made into a sickle. She supplied the handle that she made herself from her old spindle. As a young boy, the President used that sickle to cut hay. This childhood event—dismantling a weapon and building from it a tool of peace and commerce—foreshadowed the work of his adult life. It is the heart of the Biblical passage "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks."

President Nazarbayev dismantled his nation's nuclear weapons and out of that action built a friendship with the United States, an example for the world, and an opportunity for his people to move toward a more promising future. Iran and other nations could learn from Kazakhstan that a nation can grow, modernize, make progress, and gain stature not in spite of renouncing nuclear weapons, but because of it.

Increasing global security also has a critical economic dimension. In making the decision to disarm, President Nazarbayev also chose to use his nation's resources to build an economic base that would benefit all the citizens of Kazakhstan. The world's economy and stability depends on diversifying our energy base—so the Kazakhstan role in energy development is very important. The pressure is appropriately increasing on both governments and industry to embed "transparent" processes and good governance practices into their management systems. The government of Kazakhstan clearly understands this issue, given the heightened attention to increased oil production in the Caspian region. The transparency demonstrated by the government of Kazakhstan recently in announcing at a press conference the royalties received for a recent large petroleum project is a very positive step, and one that should be recognized, showcased, and supported widely. Revenue transparency is an issue on which industry and governments will likely continue to face pressure. I applaud the inclusive and constructive approach that has been taken to date, and I encourage all parties involved to continue the dialogue and working together to advance this important topic. Without economic stability—every step in the security arena becomes more difficult.

Let me acknowledge and thank Minister Vladimir Shkolnik for his role both in Kazakhstan's economic development and in its nuclear disarmament example. President Nazarbayev had the personal vision to renounce nuclear weapons, but he also had something just as important. He had in Minister Shkolnik, a man with the determination and the skill to get it done. The world owes you a great debt, Mr. Minister.

I also want to thank Ambassador Saudabayev, who this past August in Athens, Georgia, so graciously presented to me Kazakhstan's highest award to non-citizens. The Ambassador is a vigorous and talented advocate for Kazakhstan's interests in the United States. He has a keen understanding of where our nations' interests intersect, and how we can advance them together. Kazakhstan is fortunate to have a man of his talent in Washington.

It is fitting that we meet here in the halls of the United States Senate, because it was here that the first legislative debate took place on the question of reducing the nuclear threat in the post-Cold War world.